

TAKE PRIDE® IN AMERICA

It's Your Land, Lend A Hand



Through Take Pride in America, every citizen, young and old, can help preserve and protect our beautiful national treasures. We all cherish our pristine rivers, majestic mountains and woodland parks, and we all have a responsibility to care for these gifts. I hope all Americans will join us as stewards of this land we call home.

— Secretary Dirk Kempthorne

Take Pride in America® is a nationwide partnership program which inspires individuals, civic groups, corporations and others to volunteer in caring for public lands. As an initiative of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Take Pride seeks to instill an active sense of ownership and responsibility in every citizen for natural, cultural and historic resources. Additionally, Take Pride supports and recognizes the efforts of those public lands volunteers. Together, these individuals and groups protect and enhance an American legacy—the public lands that cover more than one in every three acres across the Nation.

The program originated in 1985 with Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. He recognized a growing problem with vandalism and looting of historical artifacts on public lands, and knew there was too much land for Federal enforcement personnel to combat the problem alone.



Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett gathers trash and lends a hand in the Capital River Relief project held annually in Washington, DC.

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA MISSION

Awareness Increase appreciation for our public lands and waters, and the sense of responsibility we all share to care for them.

Action Invite all citizens to become engaged in helping to maintain our shared spaces.

Awards Honor individuals and groups of volunteers for outstanding work on public lands.

Hodel's solution was to raise awareness among the public of the negative effects caused by abusing public lands and resources; namely, they were robbing the American public of a shared birthright. He believed people had to step up and become stewards of their own lands.

In February 1986, President Ronald Reagan's message to Congress was that, "All Americans should take pride in their outstanding public lands and historic sites that belong to everyone." By 1990, the Take Pride in America Act became law.

Take Pride celebrity spokesmen, including Charles Bronson, Lou Gossett, Jr., and Clint Eastwood, helped bring this message to the public and set an example of volunteerism on our public lands.



Clint Eastwood returned as the Take Pride in America spokesman in 2004.



A volunteer take pride in a local trail during National Trails Day at Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage, Alaska.

Take Pride in America was reinstated in April 2003 under the USA Freedom Corps by former Secretary

Gale A. Norton. President George W. Bush has made a strong commitment to encouraging citizens to public service.

My call tonight is for every American to commit at least two years—4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime—to the service of your neighbors and your nation... To sustain and extend the best that has emerged in America, I invite you to join the new USA Freedom Corps.

—President George W. Bush
2002 State of the Union Address

QUICK FACTS

- ★ By 2004, all 50 states and Guam were participating in the Take Pride program
- ★ More than 100 groups and organizations partner with Take Pride through the Take Pride Supporters program
- ★ 3,500 Take Pride Gardens have been planted using over 4 million seed packets from America the Beautiful Fund
- ★ Over 200,000 people volunteer on public lands annually
- ★ Nearly 100 individuals and groups have been honored with a National Award since 2003
- ★ 2,000 people have received Secretarial or Presidential Hours of Service awards for more than 3,000 or 4,000 volunteer hours on public lands
- ★ Over 45 million people have seen or read the Take Pride public service announcement featuring Clint Eastwood, the Take Pride national spokesman

VOLUNTEERING IS FUN & HEALTHY

Volunteering with Take Pride in America is good for your well being. Getting outside and volunteering in your community results in a “win-win” situation – you get active and America gets that much better.

With more than one hundred partnering organizations and new partners joining, Take Pride involves conservation, youth and recreation groups, top national corporations and other organizations. They work with Federal, state and local governments to provide resources for communities.

Take Pride has also gained support from elected officials and community leaders. Governors across the country belong to the Governor’s Council, along with a growing network of Members of Congress. Mayors from



Earth Day – April 22, 2001: President George W. Bush takes a working tour of The Adirondack Park near Wilmington, NY.

White House photo by Eric Draper

numerous cities have elected to participate in the Take Pride in America Cities program, and school principals are enlisting in the Take Pride in America Schools program.

With continued participation on behalf of elected officials and other partners, Take Pride strives to promote community involvement at public lands events throughout the country.

Annually, outstanding volunteers are recognized at the Take Pride in America National Awards Ceremony. In addition, governors and Members of Congress may honor volunteers from their state who have demonstrated a commitment to Take Pride's mission with a special Take Pride award..



This young volunteer at Homestead National Monument learns that volunteering can be fun and educational.

